

Representative Rodney Davis (IL-13)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
March 10, 2020
Member Day Hearing

Thank you, Chairwoman Lowey, Chair McCollum, Ranking Member Granger and Ranking Member Joyce, for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today. I am here to speak in support of moving my bill H.R. 139, the Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument Act, which would designate the site of the 1908 Springfield Race Riots a National Historic Monument to preserve and recognize it as an important part of our nation's history.

The site and artifacts were unearthed during construction of the Carpenter Street segment of the Springfield Rail Improvements Project and consists of the remains of five homes that were burned during the 1908 Springfield Race Riot, one of the three worst race riots in our nation's history.

At the time, the event demonstrated that racial injustice was not an isolated issue only in the South, but one to be addressed across the country. Ultimately the riots that occurred at the site in Springfield played an integral role in the formation of the NAACP. Designating this site would commemorate an important piece of history, as a public reminder of how far we have come, and how far we've yet to go.

Last year the Department of Interior released their reconnaissance survey which found that the site is likely suitable for designation as a National Historic Monument. The bill has also received a hearing in the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands.

Further, our National Parks are a wise investment, with a return on investment of nearly \$10 for every dollar invested. These investments support over 300,000 jobs and contribute \$36 billion in economic activity every year. National monuments like the Springfield Race Riot Site would provide not only an important historical and educational benefit, but a tourism and economic benefit as well.

I respectfully request that the Committee appropriate robust funding for our National Parks Service, and work to move my bill through the House in order to give this site the recognition that it deserves. Thank you and I yield back.